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EAST EUROPE BRANCH NOTES

15 Feb. 1974

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Police Interest in Dissident Author

Dissident writer Pavel Kohout was visited at his home in Prague by two policemen on February 14, but he refused to talk with them. Presumably the police wanted to question Kohout about his statement last week that the literary situation in his country is as bad now as during the Stalinist era. Kohout made this comment while defending a similar assessment by West German author Heinrich Boell. The regime may feel that it has to take some action in Kohout's case now that it has a fresh Soviet example to consider.

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EAST GERMANY

Come to the Cabaret

An East German journalist has tried to set his countrymen straight about the essence of that renowned German institution, the cabaret. He feels that cabaret artists, writers, and directors have lost sight of the fact that comedy is the indispensable element of their art form. Moreover, humor with a good dash of criticism is more important than humor that fails to haul someone over the coals. The journalist takes issue with those who think that a steady cabaret treatment of public issues, such as the Chilean situation, is more important than laughter. Relief from the regime propaganda is obviously needed in the grey GDR, where domestic subjects for satire are plentiful.

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